

Mr. Dunagan,

On February 6, 2012 HMCS Ottawa was operating in the Straits of Juan de Fuca, specifically in Constance Bank, conducting Work Ups Training including a period of sonar use and two small under water charges as part of an anti-submarine warfare exercise. These small charges were used to get the ships' company to react to a potential threat or damage to meet the necessary training requirement.

The Royal Canadian Navy has in place a very comprehensive order for all Naval vessels known as Marine Mammal Mitigation Policy which includes (but is not limited to) a visual surveillance of the area by watch officers and lookouts, monitoring of passive systems as a means to detect marine mammals as well as the use of a mitigation zone which will cease operations if marine mammals come within a certain range.

This Mitigation Policy covers both the use of sonar and charges and outlines specific avoidance zones and associated distances for each of these pieces of equipment. Should a marine mammal enter into the avoidance zone all offending activity will immediately stop.

HMCS Ottawa followed the Marine Mammal Mitigation Policy prior to and during the period when they were using ships' sonar and prior to deploying the small charges. There were no reports, nor indications of marine mammals in the area. The Royal Canadian Navy continues to work in concert with navies from around the world and the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans to ensure our policies and procedures are up to date, and to mitigate the potential effects of our operations on marine mammals.

The Royal Canadian Navy has been contacted by both US and Canadian agencies regarding the killer whale that washed ashore in Long Beach Washington, and will be corresponding with these agencies to provide them with the requested information.

I hope this answers your questions,
Royal Canadian Navy
Public Affairs

